

MINUTES

Scrutiny Committee

16:30 to 18:45

20 July 2023

Present: Councillors Ackroyd (chair), Carrington, Francis, Fulton-McAlister Galvin, Haynes, Kidman (substitute for Thomas (Vi)), Osborn, Padda, Peek (substitute for Thomas (Va)), Prinsley, Sands (M) (substitute for Driver) and Schmierer (substitute for Fox)

Apologies: Councillors Driver, Fox, Francis, Stutely, Thomas (Va) and Thomas (Vi)

Also Present: Councillor Kendrick

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 29 June 2023.

3. Scrutiny committee review of the impact of the Elections Act 2022, particularly that relating to Voter ID on Norwich City Council Elections in 2023

(The chair took the item early).

The chair welcomed the elections team leader, the democratic and elections manager and the cabinet member for resources to the meeting.

The democratic and elections manager gave a presentation, (available [here](#)) and answered member questions.

A member commented that it was interesting to see the use of bus passes as a means of identification and considered that proof of age cards should be publicised as an acceptable form of voter identification. The democratic and elections manager commented that there was currently no charge to obtain a proof of age card but this might change. He emphasised the promotion and use of Voter Authority Certificates (VACs) which were free and issued by local authorities directly.

Applications for VACs were made by completing an online application, providing a national insurance number and uploading a photograph, if the photo was acceptable and the applicant was on the electoral register than a VAC was issued. If an individual was unable to get online they could be assisted to make the application in person at city hall including having a photograph taken. In response to a member question the elections team leader advised that the numbers of people presenting in person for assistance with VAC applications during the local elections was low. Even if the number increased fivefold there was capacity within the team to support this. The democratic and elections manager commented that in terms of what resource the team needed this could not be judged until secondary legalisation on Voter ID was in place.

In response to a member question the democratic and elections manager advised the government dictated which forms of identification were acceptable to use as voter ID. A member asked if there had been an issue with peoples forms of identification differing from what their names were listed as on the electoral roll. The elections team leader advised that there were no examples of a ballot paper not being issued due to a name discrepancy. The democratic and elections manager referred to polling station staff training which covered several possible scenarios. Mitigation was put in place in that if polling station staff were considering refusing a form of voter identification they would call the office to discuss and there was also the option to call in a polling station inspector.

The head of legal and procurement advised that in preparation for the local election consideration was given to the issues that minority groups might face such as the trans community or religious groups that wore face coverings. Adjustments such as the provision of a safe discreet space were used as mitigation. In response to a member question the elections team leader advised the trans community were consulted about the Voter ID process at a national level.

Members discussed the change of legislation requiring all postal voters to reapply every three years, and that all current postal voters had to submit a new signature by January 2026. A member asked if there was enough money in the budget to conduct a targeted mail shot to groups at risk of exclusion. The democratic and elections manager advised that the authority was awaiting the issuing of secondary legislation before it could decide where resources would be allocated.

The head of legal and procurement advised that there was forecast to be a budgetary overspend at the end of quarter 1 2023/24. This was largely due to the significantly above inflation increase of stationery and postage costs. If there was justification a case could be made to government for extra funding to target mailshots at cohorts.

In response to a member question on improving communications, the democratic and elections manager advised that the information conveyed on a poll card was subscribed by law. The elections team leader advised that there was greater scope to include information on the canvas form and this was being considered. The democratic and elections manager advised that all channels of communication the council had were used to publicise Voter ID including social media channels.

In response to a discussion on promoting the need for Voter ID with younger voters the democratic and elections manager referred to the good relationships which existed between the council and universities in the city, the University of East Anglia and

Norwich University of the Arts, this enabled students to be enrolled on to the electoral register when they registered for their course.

Members discussed the extension of the right to vote in general elections to all British nationals living overseas, previously it was only for overseas voters who had lived abroad for less than 15 years. The democratic and elections manager advised that these individuals would vote in the last ward they lived in, in terms of how this would work for those who had never registered, this information and more would hopefully come out in secondary legislation which was being awaited. The election team leader noted that in the last general election there were approximately 400-600 overseas electors registered in Norwich and this was expected to triple with the extension of eligibility.

A member commented that the problem with the Voter ID legislation was that it removed the right to vote from a significant percentage of people and asked what the likelihood was of a new government repealing the legislation. The cabinet member for resources noted that the Labour Party were committed to radical changes to the legislation including giving the right to vote to European Union Citizens with a permanent right to reside in the country. It was suggested that the committee should write to all party leaders asking for polling cards to be able to be used as voter identification

In response to a member question the elections team leader noted the key change of legislation which had happened since the production of the report was the extension from early 2024 to January 2026 of the need for all registered postal voters to reapply. Norwich had 20,000 registered postal voters and a communication strategy would be considered as part of the process but the council were still awaiting confirmation of detail within secondary legislation.

A member noted that 68 individuals were unable to vote in the last local election; he considered this figure likely to increase at the general election and asked how polling staff would be trained to deal with challenging behaviour. He also referred to feedback he had received from a gentleman who was able to use a passport which was 20 years old as the picture still looked like him. How would consistency be assured across polling stations. The democratic and elections manager advised that polling station staff were taught to take a positive assumption to enable voters to vote and were trained to manage conflict. If a potential voter was to be refused they were instructed to call the office for advice too therefore ensuring consistency. The elections team leader advised that no one had been refused at the local election because of a poor likeness to their identification.

A member commented that the issuing of VACs at city hall worked well during the election and thanked the team for their work. She asked if a theory of change model existed around voter inequalities, one that worked to see who would be excluded from voting long term and how they could be incorporated. The democratic and elections manager noted that there was data now from the local election which would be used to target excluded groups.

A member considered that a pertinent recommendation would be to ask cabinet to rerun the postal vote campaign run during covid which encouraged all non postal voters to register as this could help a significant proportion of people to navigate Voter

ID issues. The head of legal and procurement noted that calculations indicated the costs of this exercise would be £55,000 and it would be helpful if the council could secure funding from government to do this work. The democratic and elections manager advised that the process of applying for a postal vote was changing and moving to an online application. The detail on this was being awaited but would need to be considered as part of any communications campaign.

The democratic and elections manager advised that any recommendations would go to cabinet and then to the council's Returning Officer to consider as it was the Returning Officer who had the responsibility for elections. In terms of the response to a campaign to increase those registered for postal votes the last campaign garnered an increase in postal voters of 10,000. The change to registering for a postal vote online might impact registration depending on how this was to be managed and detail was still being awaited. The head of legal and procurement noted that the council had a new elections management system which was used at the last election and this had improved efficiency in the processing of postal votes.

A member proposed that committee consider a recommendation to ask cabinet to commission a trial of participatory democracy methods including citizen assemblies based on the model of the theory of change to ensure wide scale representation was achieved. Elections were only one part of democracy and the use of participatory democracy such as citizens assemblies could be considered as a means of increasing engagement during the election period. Members discussed that councillors were elected and represented citizens but it was noted that citizens assemblies were a different form of democracy and did not replace councillors. A member noted that however well commissioned a model of participatory democracy was, it rarely ensured that individuals of all socio-economic backgrounds were included and therefore it was incumbent upon councillors to be a conduit for democracy.

Following a vote it was:-

RESOLVED to ask cabinet to:

- 1) As part of a future council consultation process, investigate sources of funding to trial and potentially commission demographically balanced participatory democracy methods including citizens assemblies based on the model of theories of change to ensure widespread representation is achieved;
- 2) Research those in Norwich who may be disenfranchised as a result of the introduction of voter ID and assess how the Council can promote uptake amongst those disenfranchised;
- 3) Ensure that communications planning for future elections includes:
- 4) Promoting the Voter Authority Certificate and Proof of Age passes as an avenue for securing voter ID and engage with local communities to raise awareness;
- 5) Promoting that acceptable Voter ID includes expired ID and, where relevant, EU passports and identity cards;

- 6) Promoting the concept of Voter ID to younger groups, including those able to vote for the first time, and the different communication methodologies that may be more relevant for younger groups such as alternative social media channels;
- 7) Ask the Electoral Registration Officer to re-run the postal vote registration programme as previously undertaken in 2020 to raise awareness amongst non-postal voters, requesting funding if available to do so;
- 8) Thank the Returning Officer and her team for the work undertaken to support the implementation of Voter ID and the successful undertaking of the May 2023 election in Norwich;
- 9) To write to all party leaders to request that if called on to form a government, they should prioritise the abolition of the Election Act 2022, and if not, to include the poll card as an acceptable form of ID.

4. Report from the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC)

Councillor Prinsley advised that at the last meeting of the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC) questions were asked of the three acute trusts about their waiting lists, the introduction of electronic patient records and the waiting times especially at outpatients and surgery. The point was made that extremely long wait times had reduced but there was an increase in those waiting a long time. In terms of progress on how the hospitals were integrating with each other, in order to achieve greater efficiencies, there were long delays with the introduction of electronic patient records which were key to this.

There was a discussion at the meeting regarding staff retention at hospitals especially in relation to nurses and he raised a question about parking. He considered that if it were difficult for staff to park at the hospital then this impacted staff retention. The second part of the meeting focussed on engagement with the Norfolk Eating Disorder Services which was a service in transition. A member commented that there were issues in relation to medical emergencies and eating disorders and the wait time for children and young people. He noted that wait times for adults were not measured and that he would like to see the data in relation to out of area placements.

It was noted that the full minutes of the meeting were publicly available on the County Council's website [here](#).

RESOLVED to note the update from the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5. Report from the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Sub Panel (NCCSPSP)

It was noted that the last meeting was held on 8 June 2023 prior to the appointment of the current representatives. The full minutes of the meeting were publicly available on the County Council's website [here](#).

6. Scrutiny committee work programme 2022-23

Members considered the work programme and following debate it was:

RESOLVED to

- 1) ask the committee officer to ask officers if the topic on how the council addresses anti-social behaviour could be moved from the October to September meeting of committee;
- 2) move the topic on the Corporate Plan update to October 2023 meeting of committee and to note this could be subject to change;
- 3) move the topic on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy to the March 2024 meeting of committee; and
- 4) ask officers to circulate a terms of reference for a task and finish group in relation to Retrofitting by email and for the group to convene and to report back to committee at its November 2023 meeting.

CHAIR

MINUTES

Extraordinary Scrutiny Committee

16:30 to 18:45

25 July 2023

Present: Councillors Fulton-McAlister (chair following election), Carrington, Champion (substitute for Francis), Fox, Galvin, Haynes, Osborn, Prinsley, Stutely, Thomas (Vi) and Wright (substitute for Ackroyd).

Apologies: Councillors Ackroyd, Driver, Francis, Padda, Stutely, Thomas (Va)

Also Present: Councillor Giles

1. Declarations of interest

Councillor Carrington declared an other interest in item 2, Scrutiny review of welcoming Refugees and Asylum Seekers to Norwich and overcoming obstacles to their smooth integration, in that she is employed by Norfolk County Council as a social worker and could work directly with asylum seekers as part of her role.

2. Scrutiny review of welcoming Refugees and Asylum Seekers to Norwich and overcoming obstacles to their smooth integration

The head of legal and procurement provided an update on the report, she advised that the People from Abroad Team (PfAT) had previously indicated they would be able to attend the meeting but now felt unable to do so. Serco and their subcontractor Cromwood who provided dispersal accommodation on behalf of the Home Office had responded to enquiries to attend the meeting by advising that any issues should be raised with the Strategic Migration Partnership. Finally, enquiries with Health bodies indicated that they are accountable to the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and that the Norwich City Council Scrutiny Committee may wish to refer the topic of Refugee and Asylum Seeker support to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The chair welcomed Abdul Al Dammad from the Red Cross, Gee Cook from New Routes, Beatrice Humarau from The Bridge Plus, Sarah Wynn and Rasha Ibrahim from the Zainab Project and Claire Wood from the Norwich City of Sanctuary to the meeting and invited them to introduce themselves and their organisation to the committee.

Abdul Al Dammad from the Red Cross advised the service provided refugee support services. He had received from complaints from families housed in the Norwich Hotel that it was not fit for purpose. He noted that equipment was needed for children's activities at the hotel over the summer holidays. He asked how the asylum seeker and refugee experience could be improved and considered that communication from the council could move from being formal to more friendly in nature.

Gee Cook from New Routes noted that the organisation had been working with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers for over 20 years. She considered from anecdotal evidence that the dispersal hotels had experienced teething problems. Measures had been put in place to make improvements and food provision had recently improved but there was still a need for more activities at the hotels. She highlighted that the support organisations coordinated with each other to advertise activities.

Ms Cook advised that New Routes had a good working relationship with PfAT, who took onboard their suggestions and recommendations and she confirmed that PfAT had taken measures to improve the situation at hotels. There were not enough activities taking place at the hotel in the context that people could be in their rooms all day.

Beatrice Humarau from the Bridge Plus advised the organisation worked with those who had received their refugee status and provided information, guidance and advocacy. The organisation didn't work with those refugees who came as part of the dispersal resettlement program as these households were supported by PfAT. She noted that in relation to housing there was an issue with lack of communication and the shift to digital by default was difficult for those who would benefit from face to face interaction.

Rasha Ibrahim from the Zainab project advised that the organisation started in November last year to help asylum seekers and refugees to gain work experience, to support their wellbeing and signpost to other services. The project was looking for a base. She noted that language and culture were barriers to integration and highlighted that many of their service users had not been educated in their home countries which presented a challenge.

Sarah Wynn, also from the Zainab project continued that the organisation worked to integrate service users with local services such as the police and health. She noted that refugees and asylum seekers found themselves in an alien environment where they were confronted with the formality of bureaucracy in a different language. A key issue was the food provision at the hotels and the project had households using their space to cook.

Claire Wood from Norwich City of Sanctuary advised the project's purpose was to foster a culture of welcome in Norwich and noted all the organisations present were on its steering group. The project worked with organisations such as cafes, theatres and schools to encourage them to be welcoming to asylum seekers and refugees. The organisation had been working with City Council to become a Council of Sanctuary and she hoped to link in with the new Leader of the council to progress this work.

A member asked the organisations for examples of some of the challenges they had experienced when communicating with the council. Beatrice Humarau from the Bridge Plus noted that it was difficult to come into the council and see someone face to face without an appointment. There was a lack of communication especially in regards to housing and homelessness services and this impacted negatively on service users mental health.

Members discussed the food provision at the dispersal hotels and questioned if the religious and cultural needs of the residents were being met. Ms Wynn from the Zainab project advised that they provided their service users with a voucher for the social supermarket to buy food but there were no cooking facilities available at the hotels. The head of legal and procurement advised that issues with the quality of food had been raised by the council with Serco who had provided information as to how provision was being developed.

Members discussed the needs of children at the hotels especially how their needs would be met over the summer holiday period. Abdul Al Dammad from the Red Cross advised he had been contacted by a housing officer at the hotel requesting activity equipment for children and the services were coordinating with each other to respond. Gee Cook noted that New Routes provided a summer programme of activities and this was made available to families in the hotel with transport being provided.

In relation to the provision of second hand goods, Rasha Ibrahim from the Zainab project advised that in some cultures there was a shame associated with wearing second hand clothing.

Councillor Giles the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion noted that the council offered three months free, then a discounted go for less membership to access leisure services at Riverside or the Norman Centre to asylum seekers but he appreciated that transport could still be an issue. He noted that Sports England funding had been secured to provide weekly 7 aside football close to the hotel accommodating single person households which had garnered 15-30 attendees weekly. Ms Ibrahim asked what the possibility of extending free membership until asylum seekers were awarded their refugee status was and the cabinet member agreed to take this away for consideration but noted that Riverside Leisure was not operated by the council.

Members discussed issues asylum seekers faced in relation to healthcare with Claire Wood noting that many were not registered with a General Practitioner or a Dentist. Beatrice Humarau noted many struggled to get face to face appointments and access to interpreting varied. The Bridge Plus had conducted a survey with their service users which highlighted that access to Wellbeing services was challenging.

A member asked in relation to council services such as anti-social behaviour, repairs and adaptations what improvements to access could be made. Ms Wynn noted that if English was not a person's first language it was difficult to use the website and there were long waits to get through on the phone. Ms Cook noted there was a long wait to hear back about complaints in relation to repairs. A member advised that if individuals were experiencing issues with repairs they could contact their local ward councillor for advice.

Members questioned if asylum seekers and refugees were engaged with when the website was being developed. A member suggested an audit of how the council communicated with service users other than via the website could be conducted.

In relation to a member question the neighbourhood and community enabling manager advised that the council's community centres were now all run by individual organisations. A list of what activities they provided could be collated and the council could suggest they offer reduced price or free access for the cohort to activities but it was ultimately the individual organisations decision.

Members asked the support organisations present if there were any other points they would like to raise. Mr Al Dammad wondered how many asylum seekers in the area were awarded refugee status and if it would be possible for the council to ring each and welcome them to the city. Ms Wynn referred to the effort to welcome those asylum seekers who had arrived from Ukraine. A member noted that if he was aware of those granted refugee status in his ward he would be happy to provide a telephone call to welcome them to the city.

As regards mental health services it was noted that more provision was needed. In terms of individuals that had experienced multiple trauma there was no provision in place. Finally it was noted that numbers receiving refugee status were increasing and there was an opportunity for the support organisations and the council to work more closely together to support their integration.

Following a vote it was:-

RESOLVED to:

- 1) Ask the committee officer to circulate the set of questions to members of the committee and then sent to People from Abroad Team for written answers;
- 2) Ask cabinet to engage with organisations that support asylum seekers and refugees, when making updates to the website to ensure that these changes are accessible;
- 3) Ask cabinet to explore becoming a Council of Sanctuary that will include a service user group of asylum seekers and refugees, to ensure that their voices and experiences are listened to on an ongoing basis;
- 4) Thank the organisations that have attended committee, and other organisations, and their work with asylum seekers and refugees;
- 5) Condemn Home Office policies in relation to refugee and asylum seekers;
- 6) Ask cabinet to include a strand within the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy review that relates to asylum seekers and refugees;
- 7) Ask cabinet to engage with community centres to provide free activities to asylum seekers and refugees;
- 8) Ask cabinet to engage with Places for Leisure to extend the provision of free gym services to asylum seekers;

- 9) Ask the leader of the council to write to the Norwich Business Improvement District to support refugees and asylum seekers to develop an outreach programme to asylum seekers and refugees;
- 10) To explore the potential for councillors to have training on using the INTRAN system;
- 11) To conduct user testing of the Norwich City Council website with service users;
- 12) To conduct an audit of communications that the council produces, this would involve service users;
- 13) To explore the use of City Hall for organisations that support asylum seekers and refugees;
- 14) To ask cabinet to explore the ability for asylum seekers, refugees and other residents that have limited English to book face-to-face appointments;
- 15) To ask the leader of the council and Lord Mayor to invite refugees and asylum seekers to City Hall to be able to engage with them directly;
- 16) To request that cabinet treat these recommendations as a matter of urgency;
- 17) To produce a social media campaign that details activities that are happening within the summer holidays and asking for donations of clothing and toys;
- 18) To explore funding streams to be able to provide a similar provision that is provided Ukrainian refugees to other asylum seekers and refugees.

CHAIR

MINUTES

Scrutiny Committee

16:30 to 18:00

21 September 2023

Present: Councillors Ackroyd (chair), Carrington, Champion (substitute for Galvin), Fox, Francis, Haynes, Kidman (substitute for Driver), Osborn, Peek (substitute for Thomas (Va)), Prinsley and Sands (M) (substitute for Padda).

Apologies: Councillors, Driver, Fulton-McAlister, Galvin, Padda, Stutely, Thomas (Va) and Thomas (Vi).

Also Present: Councillor Jones

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Review of how the council addresses anti-social behaviour (ASB)

The Acting Community Safety Manager presented the report. He provided an overview of the team and introduced the Safer Neighbourhoods Coordinator and the ASB Manager who were in attendance.

A member referred to the two current vacancies in the structure for Response Officers and asked if there were issues with the recruitment and retention of officers and what support was offered. He asked further if there were plans to extend the number of officers working with the Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator as real improvements had been seen since he came into post. The Acting Community Safety Manager advised that work had been done on recruitment over the last 18 months. In terms of staff retention, the team were offered training courses and qualifications in order that they felt they had the right skills to do the job.

The ASB Manager advised that she was now receiving enquires from staff in other teams that were interested in working in the ASB team. She had been looking at career development for officers and succession planning, ensuring that the triage staff had the necessary skills if an enforcement officer vacancy arose.

The Acting Community Safety Manager advised in reference to the Safer Neighbourhood Initiative that what had been achieved was to be reviewed and

analysed to ensure that other parts of the council were responding as appropriate to requests for assistance. The Safer Neighbourhoods Coordinator role should be a coordinating one, pulling together the work of all teams. The Safer Neighbourhoods Coordinator noted that this happened in some areas but that there was a lack of capacity in some teams.

A member referred to how helpful it had been to have the Safer Neighbourhoods Coordinator offer walkabouts in certain areas as residents felt their concerns were being listened to. He asked if what had been successful was being looked at and how the Safer Neighbourhood Areas mapped with other areas such as the Reducing Inequalities Target Areas (RITAs).

The Acting Community Safety Manager advised that he worked at a County-wide level with relevant partners to establish initiatives and strategize. He referred to the new Serious Violence Duty which was a priority for Community Safety Partnerships to ensure they had a strategy in place to counter serious violence in their area. This would involve reviewing different layers of information and evidence and looking at pockets of activity.

In response to a member question the Acting Community Safety Manager advised that CCTV monitors were located on the ground floor of City Hall and it was a modern and fit for purpose facility. There were over 100 cameras which were mainly focussed on the city centre, the council also had housing cameras in blocks and tower blocks and there were a number of redeployable cameras. In terms of redeployable cameras, access to wifi and electricity had to be considered. He noted that a bid was being made to the Safer Streets Fund for more redeployable cameras at present. Cameras were monitored live over peak periods Friday, Saturday night into Sunday morning and played an important role in ensuring the safety of the Nighttime Economy.

If councillors were aware of an issue in their ward there was a process to follow on the intranet to request a redeployable camera. Requests were considered in the round and if deployment of a camera was considered public consultation with people affected in the area would take place. The Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator noted that if an issue were identified where a camera would be of use then it was important that the police took the lead. It would be the police who would build a business case for a camera to be deployed and he advised councillors to contact local police Safer Neighbourhood Teams to discuss. The police took the lead because it would be they using the footage and it was important to have their buy in and support.

In response to a member question the Acting Community Safety Manager noted that staff training had added professionalism to the role. The ASB Manager noted that it had given staff the confidence to know what tools and powers were at their disposal and which was the right tool for the situation. Staff were able to escalate matters to court but also were able to advise if a matter was not ASB but a neighbour dispute. In response to a member question the ASB Manager advised that it was crucial to ensure that residents received the right support and were advised what things they could do for themselves.

In response to a member question the Acting Community Safety Manager advised that he represented the council at the Countywide Community Safety Partnership. The benefits of attending the meeting were that it increased partnership and multi-agency

working and it impacted positively on bids for funding, for example in terms of the Safer Streets Funding. The ASB Manager noted that it was about stakeholder management, understanding what mattered to external partners and what their challenges were, how could we support them and them us. The Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator referred to the Anti Social Behaviour Action Group which was held monthly with representatives of about 15 different agencies and noted that this was a very productive meeting in terms of information sharing and joint working.

In response to a member question the Acting Community Safety Manager advised that that the service cost approximately £800,000 for the council to deliver and that there was a statutory duty for the organisation to provide a service. He noted that the service aimed to develop to establish more resilient neighbourhoods, there was more work needed to analysis what was needed in the city going forward.

A member referred to the list of enforcement activity that the team had carried out since February 2022 as listed on page 39 of the agenda. The ASB Manager noted that that it was not about the number of actions taken but that the right resolution was achieved and the correct tool used. She considered that there had been a perception previously that the service was reluctant to take enforcement action. She advised that the service was learning what action was effective to deal with the root of the problem and was taking coordinated action with partners to resolve issues.

A member asked a question in relation to methods of engagement in the Safer Neighbourhood Areas. The Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator advised that a paper based survey was delivered to all households within the Safer Neighbourhood Areas as well as an online survey, this achieved a 14-20% response rate. He noted that where there was an established Facebook group in an area response rates were better. This learning would be taken forward when further engagement was conducted.

In relation to how ASB data in other areas was gathered the team were working to bring together data from different sources such as the police, ASB reports, street scene reports relating to sharps and street drinking to give a refined picture of where the issues were. In terms of learning from the Safer Neighbourhood Areas it was noted that six areas were too many to conduct satisfactory engagement in at once.

In response to a member question the Acting Community Safety Manager advised that the team conducted prevention work, each case was risk assessed and the needs of each individual considered and referrals for appropriate support made. The ASB Manager noted that by the time that cases came to the team they were beyond the prevention stage and the focus was on the prevention of future harm. She highlighted that work to reduce 'boomerang' cases was undertaken in order that issues were not just moved on but that a long lasting solution was found. This included referrals and joint working with drug and alcohol agencies and mental health services.

The Acting Community Safety Manager noted that the council worked in a joined up way by holding Complex Case Strategy meetings which pulled together departments working with an individual as well as outside agencies. He also referred to the work of the Specialist Support Team which provided support to individuals to manage their tenancies. Councillor Jones referred to the Safer Norwich Partnership which had

emerged out of the work on the Safer Norwich Strategy and would bring partners and resources together to consider how best to support each other.

A member asked if it was possible to breakdown the budget of the service into prevention and punitive activities. The Acting Community Safety Manager noted that every case varied and that if there was a serious incident then prevention was not possible. However, wrap around support was provided to individuals which was preventative. The ASB Manager compared Community ASB with Locational ASB, Community ASB was hard to separate out into preventative and punitive actions, the priority for the service was to look holistically at the issue in question. In terms of Locational ASB prevention activities might be easier to quantify as the aim was design out crime for example via the use of alley gates.

A member asked if CCTV was used in a preventative capacity as well as to catch people in the act as it were. He noted that when a redeployable camera was placed at Barnards Yard whilst no perpetrator was captured residents did report feeling safer. Further, he asked in relation to door access entry controls being installed what was the methodology used to decide which block would be prioritised and was the installation programme on track. In terms of alley gates what was the target number to be installed.

The Acting Community Safety Manager noted that CCTV worked in some cases but it was a finite resource and the location along with feedback from local residents had to be considered. He confirmed that CCTV could be used as a deterrent and noted that CCTV had been used to target fly tipping as part of the LOVE Norwich campaign and police had noted a corollary reduction in ASB. The Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator advised that a target had not been set for the installation of alley gates, he highlighted that residents had to want to have them installed and a target was not helpful. He advised that the door entry control programme was ready to go and blocks had been selected based on feedback from residents, councillors and the location of ASB across the city.

The installation of door entry systems incurred a cost for residents and the cost of living crisis might discourage residents from wanting them. The programme would be run by the Property Services Team and delivery would start in the next few weeks. Leaseholders had been consulted with but tenants were yet to be consulted and the Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator had spoken with the Property Services Team about resident engagement.

A member asked a question about sensitive lets and the ASB Manager advised that where the team were aware that a property had become vacant as a result of ASB a sensitive let was requested. She advised going forward that the team would assist with the short listing process for properties which had become vacant as a result of ASB. She noted that the biggest issue was the limited amount of information which was available on relet and that of course people's situation could change.

A member asked about the Prevent programme and the Acting Community Safety Manager advised that he sat on the Channel Panel. Channel is a multi-agency programme which identified and supported at risk individuals and the Channel Panel assessed the nature and extent of the risk and developed the most appropriate support plan for that individual. The council contributed through information sharing and did

not make many referrals itself, there was work ongoing to get the housing team trained in Prevent. The council had a responsibility too in relation to the booking of buildings and or rooms, to ensure these were not being used for terrorist related activities.

In response to a member question the Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator advised that the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in relation to vehicles had impacted positively on the number of calls to the police in relation to vehicle nuisance. For the period 26 July-12 September 2023 there were 24 calls in relation to vehicle nuisance and for the same period of the previous year it was 52. Anecdotally the Operational Partnership Team, (teams in each council district headed by a Police Sergeant) reported that residents were phoning in and reporting vehicles congregating in the city. The PSPO did not preclude vehicles congregating, there had to be ASB.

A member asked if there was any monitoring of work undertaken in areas by the Community Engagement Team and its impact on ASB. The Acting Community Safety Manager advised that there was a much stronger working relationship in place between the teams. The aim of the council was to create more cohesive and resilient neighbourhoods. The Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator noted that the assessment of the impact of such work was a real challenge as it was difficult to judge. Walkabouts were conducted in target neighbourhoods to promote engagement with residents and the Community Engagement Team were brought in to develop this.

The deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety thanked the committee for their consideration of the topic. She noted that a lot of development of the service had taken place and it was useful to hear member's feedback.

RESOLVED to request that cabinet:

- 1) Consider whether the positive outcomes achieved by the ASB team justifies an increase in resource and funding for the service;
- 2) Thank the officers and the ASB team for the work they are doing and continue to do;
- 3) Continue to prioritise the service and support the ongoing training and development programme and ensure sufficient funding is available to achieve its objectives;
- 4) Expand the resources given to the programme of presentations to other partners;
- 5) Consider whether the resources for the safer neighbourhood scheme can be increased given the successful outcomes achieved from the scheme and consider the outcomes of the scheme;
- 6) Consider lessons learnt from the locational approach trialled for the safer neighbourhood initiative and how this can be expanded for other neighbourhoods;
- 7) Provide a briefing event for all Councillors on the PREVENT scheme; and

- 8) Consider surveying anti-social behaviour in areas where the community enabling team have focused to assess the impact of their work

3. Scrutiny committee work programme 2022-23

The chair proposed that at the October session the committee conduct a review of the effectiveness of the scrutiny committee. The Monitoring Officer referred to the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's self-evaluation framework which she suggested the committee use as a basis for their review. The first stage would involve requesting all councillors complete a survey prior to the meeting, the responses from which would be used as a basis to conduct the self-evaluation exercise.

RESOLVED to agree that:

- 1) The October session focus on a self-evaluation exercise on the effectiveness of the scrutiny committee; and
- 2) A survey be sent to all members of the council to establish their views on the effectiveness of the committee.

CHAIR